

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 6226

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, MARR, TU, US
SUBJ: REACTION TO ELEKDAG VISIT

1. MSA COUNSELOR AND EMBOFF ON AUGUST 29 DISCUSSED ELEKDAG'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON WITH YALIM ERALP (DIRECTOR, MFA'S DEFENSE AGREEMENTS SECTION), WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED MFA SECGEN.

2. ERALP SAID THAT HE WAS CONCERNED OVER THE IMPRESSION AND POSSIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH AROSE IN CONNECTION WITH THE PRESENTATION OF THE TURKISH PAPER ON AUGUST 15 (STATE 210351). HE REGRETTED THAT THE PAPER APPARENTLY LEFT SOME PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT WAS ESTABLISHING "PRECONDITIONS" REGARDING THE OPENING OF US BASES. THIS WAS NOT THE INTENTION, AND UPON THEIR RETURN TO ANKARA, ELEKDAG AND ERALP HAD DISCUSSED THE MISCONCEPTION WITH ECEVIT. ERALP SAID THAT HE COULD ASSURE US THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RETREAT FROM COMMITMENTS PREVIOUSLY MADE AND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS
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PERSONALLY COMMITTED TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE US AND IS PLEDGED TO REOPEN THE BASES. ERALP STATED THAT THE INTENT OF THE TURKISH PAPER WAS NOT TO RENEGE ON COMMITMENTS MADE, BUT ONLY TO POINT OUT THAT THE ECONOMIC CRISES WAS OF SUCH A DIMENSION THAT, WITHOUT ITS AMELIORATION, THERE WAS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF MIGHT FALL AND THUS

COULD NOT CARRY OUT ITS PREVIOUSLY MADE COMMITMENTS.

3. ERALP SAID THAT AS A RESULT OF THE ELEKDAG VISIT TO THE US, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS FULLY AWARE OF THE US POSITION AND REALIZED THE DISRUPTIVE CONSEQUENCES TO BILATERAL RELATIONS THAT WOULD BE CAUSED BY UNDUE DELAY IN REOPENING THE BASES. AS A "POLITICAL MAN" ECEVIT UNDERSTOOD THE POLITICAL NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND THE CONGRESSMEN WHO SUPPORTED LIFTING THE EMBARGO. THE PRIME MINISTER APPRECIATED FULLY THE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL PRICE PAID BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE CONGRESS ON BEHALF OF TURKEY. AT THE SAME TIME, ECEVIT WAS CONSTRAINED TO WORK WITHIN THE TURKISH POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE ISSUE OF THE BASES HAS BECOME A PARTISAN POLITICAL ISSUE. IT WAS FOR THIS REASON THAT THE PRIME MINISTER PREFERRED A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE VISIT WHICH DID NOT FOCUS ON THE BASE OPENING ISSUE.

4. ERALP SAID THAT GOT IS NOW DISCUSSING AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL A RESPONSE TO THE US DRAFT ON THE OPENING OF THE INSTALLATIONS (STATE 217218). THE PRIME MINISTER WILL BE TURNING HIS PERSONAL ATTENTION TO THE ISSUE NOW THAT DELIBERATIONS ON THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN HAVE CONCLUDED. ERALP EXPECTED WE WOULD HAVE A REPLY SOON AFTER NEXT WEEK'S HOLIDAY WHICH WOULD
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SERVE TO INITIATE NEGOTIATIONS AND HOPEFULLY SET AT REST US CONCERNS ON THE EARLY OPENING OF THE INSTALLATIONS. HE REITERATED THAT GOT WAS PREPARED TO COMMENCE NEGOTIATIONS AS SOON AS THE EMBARGO WAS LIFTED AND REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT REOPENING THE BASES IS NOT AN ISSUE.

5. COMMENT: WHILE WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY ERALP'S CLEARLY UPBEAT PRESENTATION AND EXTENT TO WHICH HE ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY ON BEHALF OF HIS MENTORS FOR ANY "COOLNESS" WHICH THEIR "FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE" MAY HAVE CREATED IN WASHINGTON, WE WILL WANT TO HAVE HIS INSIDER'S VIEW CONFIRMED BY ELEKDAG AND THE PRIME MINISTER BEFORE CONCLUDING WE ARE HOME AND DRY.
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